

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, MAIN
SWITCHGEAR STATION
(Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Building No. 38)
(Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks)
(Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks
Division)
VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division
1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
Saint Louis
Independent City
Missouri

HABS MO-1943-S
MO-1943-S

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, MAIN SWITCHING STATION (BUILDING 38)

HABS No. MO-1943-S

- Location:** Building 38, VA Medical Center, 1 Jefferson Barracks Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri
USGS Quadrangle Oakville, Missouri
UTM Coordinates 16 7257555 E 9966142 N
- Date of Construction:** 1951
- Designer:** U.S. Veterans Administration (VA)
- Contractor:** Unknown
- Present Owner:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Present Use:** Main Switchgear
- Significance:** A switchgear facility associated with the electrical system of the hospital has been located at this site since 1951. The structure was originally built as utility infrastructure as part of the 1950s expansion of the hospital to accommodate veterans of World War II and the Korean War, and the conversion of the campus to a neuropsychiatric hospital. The site continued to house equipment related to the hospital's electrical utility infrastructure.
- Project Information:** This project was sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as mitigation for the demolition of buildings at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, a property that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places via consensus determination of eligibility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office.

Description:

The Main Switching Station (Building 38) is located east of the developed area of the VA Medical Center, in an area of grass lawn with trees. The current Main Switching Station facility consists of two components: a gabled metal structure and a fenced-in switchgear and transformer. All of this equipment appears to date from the last thirty years.

The gabled metal structure is prefabricated and has a series of small doors that appear to allow access to electrical or telecommunications equipment. This small structure has sheet metal walls and roof and sits on a concrete slab foundation.

The second part of the facility is an electrical switchgear unit that sits on a concrete pad, which rests on a square of asphalt pavement, and the asphalt area is enclosed by a high chain-link fence with barbed wire at the top.

History:

The Main Switching Station was developed to provide additional electrical capacity when the VA Hospital was expanded and converted into a neuropsychiatric hospital in 1950-1952. The conversion involved the construction of four major psychiatric treatment buildings and several smaller buildings, which would have increased the electrical utility requirements of the hospital significantly. This switching station was developed in 1951 to serve that need.

The switching station allows multiple circuits to draw from the same electricity source and allows some circuits to function when other circuits have required shutdown due to being overloaded. A 1959 drawing of the building shows a metal shed-roof building, long and narrow, surrounded by a high chain-link fence.¹ Today, the facility consists of a metal building mounted on a concrete slab, and a switchgear unit that is surrounded by a chain-link fence. The facility continues to be an important part of the utility infrastructure of the medical center and is not scheduled for demolition in the near future.

Sources:

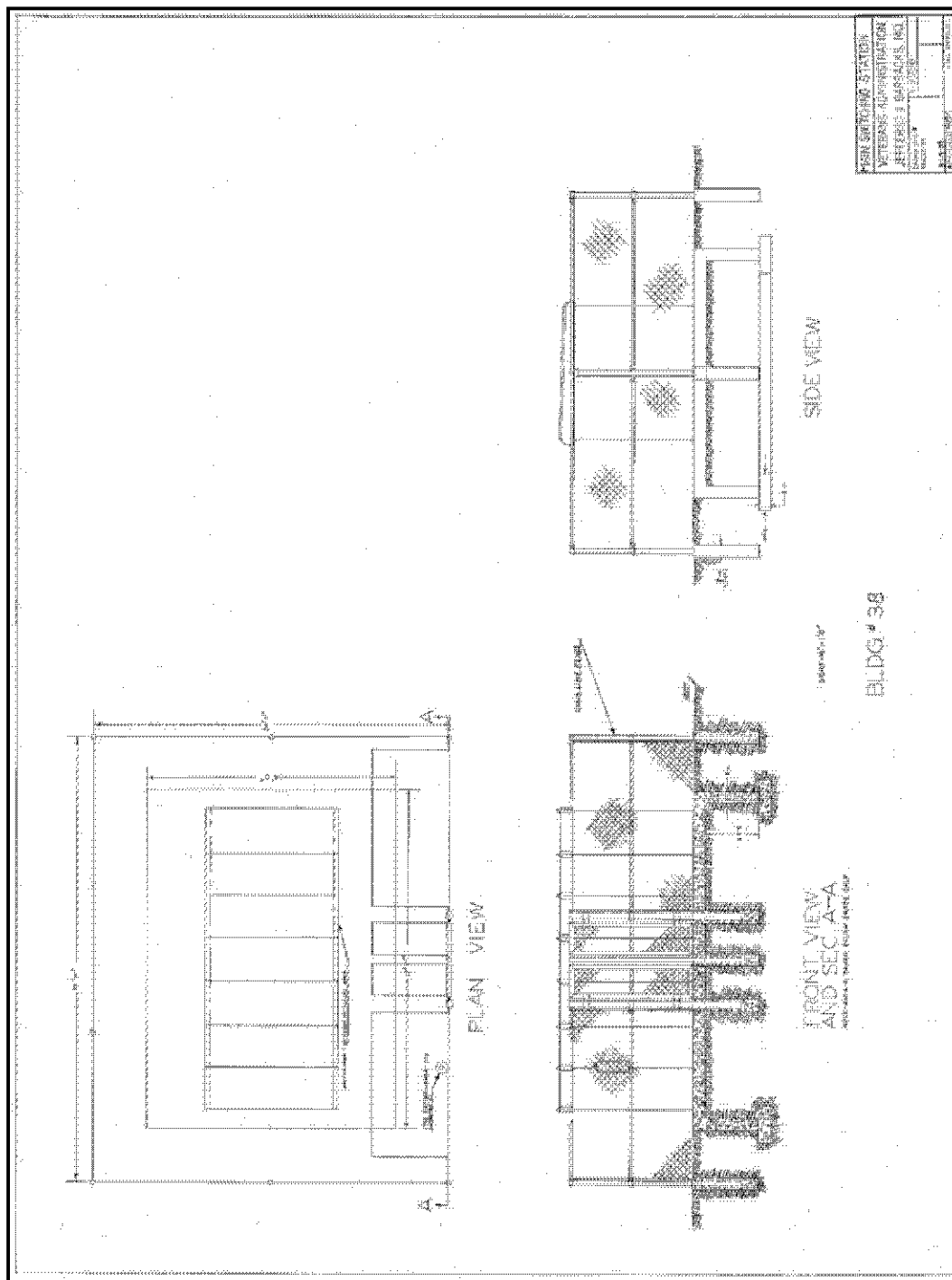
U.S. Veterans Administration. *Main Switching Station, Bldg. No. 38*. 1959. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

¹ U.S. Veterans Administration, *Main Switching Station, Bldg. No. 38*, 1959, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

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Plans and elevations for the Main Switching Station (Building 38), 1959